

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A method of administering payment for obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer account, a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file having a purchase parameter including a value predetermined by the customer;

~~creating a customer account in the database;~~

~~creating a merchant file in the database, the merchant file having merchant banking information;~~

creating an administrative program in electronic communication with the administrator and having a merchant approval program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the purchase parameter in response to a transaction approval request;

transmitting a transaction approval request from the merchant approval program to the customer file to query the purchase parameter;

receiving at the merchant approval program a transaction approval request;

transmitting an approval of the transaction approval request when the request falls within the purchase parameter;

transmitting a payment instruction from the administrator in response to the approval of the transaction;

providing a notification program, the notification program transmitting a notice to a customer of activity on the customer account.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the notification program transmits a notice to a customer in real-time.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claims 18, wherein the administrator includes a customer interface, the customer interface being operable to permit access to the customer account.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the notification program is operable to transmit a notice to a customer at a predetermined time following the occurrence of activity on the customer account.

23. (Currently Amended) An administration apparatus ~~system~~ for directing payments for financial obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the ~~system~~ apparatus comprising:

an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the purchase parameter being predefined by the customer, the administrative program including a merchant approval program and a collection program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the customer file in response to approval request.

24. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the customer file further comprises a customer identifying statistic.

25. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 24, wherein the customer identifying statistic is selected from a group consisting of: customer name, customer address, customer telephone number, customer social security number, customer date of birth and customer bank account number.

26. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for a purchase.

27. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for all purchases within a predetermined period of time.

28. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the database further comprises a merchant file.

29. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 28, wherein the merchant file includes a merchant category.

30. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the customer file includes a payment option.

31. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises an account opening program.

32. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises a notification program.

33. (Currently Amended) The administration ~~system~~ apparatus of claim 23, wherein the administrative program further comprises a customer account interface.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of administering payments for transactions made by a customer that is a consumer of goods or services from a merchant, the method comprising:

providing an administrator;

creating a database in electronic communication with the administrator having a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the merchant file having a merchant account number and a merchant category assigned thereto, the purchase parameter including a value predetermined by the customer;

creating an administrative program in electronic communication with the administrator and having a merchant approval program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the purchase parameters in response to ~~an~~ a transaction approval request;

transmitting a transaction approval request from the merchant approval program to the customer file to query the purchase parameter;

receiving at the merchant approval program a transaction approval request;

transmitting an approval of the transaction approval request when the request falls within the purchase parameter.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for a purchase.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the purchase parameter comprises a customer dollar limit threshold for all purchases within a predetermined period of time.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of transmitting an electronic notice in real time to a customer.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) An administration apparatus ~~system~~ for directing payments for financial obligations of a customer that is a consumer of goods or services, the ~~system~~ apparatus comprising:

an administrator having a database and an administrative program, the database including a customer file and a merchant file, the customer file including a purchase parameter, the purchase parameter being predefined by the customer, the merchant file including merchant banking information, the administrative program including a merchant approval program, the merchant approval program being operable to query the customer file in response to approval request.